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## Articles

### Iraq: Relations With the United States

Since last summer Iraq has been trying to enlist US support for its efforts to force Iran to the negotiating table. Iraq wants the United States to support an arms embargo against Iran and to provide aid in funding and financing alternative export routes for Iraqi oil. We believe that Iraq will work to improve ties with the United States as long as it believes Washington can help it end the war. At the same time, Baghdad is suspicious of US-Middle East policy, which it believes is overly influenced by Israel.

#### Background

When Iraq announced last summer that it planned to attack Gulf shipping using its newly acquired Super Etendard fighters, the United States appealed in the United Nations for moderation. No agreement to restrain itself was forthcoming from Iraq, but Baghdad subsequently proposed that Washington help it end the war. Possibly in an attempt to conciliate Washington, Iraq moderated its stand on a number of foreign policy issues.

announced support for a proposed Iraqi oil pipeline link to Jordan. Washington recommended the so-called Aqaba line to the Export-Import Bank, which is considering supplying loan guarantees for the project.

#### The Aqaba Project

US rapprochement with Iraq first encountered difficulty over Washington's attempts to aid the Aqaba project. Baghdad wants the pipeline built because the new line could significantly offset Iraqi oil revenue losses sustained when Damascus closed the Iraq-Syria line in 1982. Iraq, however, is uneasy about the Aqaba route, which would pass close to the Israeli border and thus be vulnerable to Israeli attack.

In an attempt to ensure the safety of the Aqaba line, Washington asked Israel for guarantees of the project's safety. The Israeli press learned of Washington's approach, and a number of articles appeared speculating on the Iraqi need for guarantees.

The official Iraqi newspaper *Al Thawrah* heaped scorn on Israeli press reports that Baghdad sought to improve relations with the Jewish state. The paper claimed that Iraq would not consider negotiating with Israel, directly or indirectly.

On the oil front, Washington

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#### The Chemical Warfare Flap

US dealings with Iraq were troubled anew in March, when the State Department condemned Iraq's use of chemical weapons.

bases in the Persian Gulf.

Despite its publicly expressed irritation, Baghdad agreed to overlook the condemnation. The controversy reemerged, however, when reports appeared in the US press of an alleged US-Israeli plan to destroy Iraq's chemical facilities. Washington discounted the reports as fanciful. Baghdad took them seriously. In a note to the United Nations, Iraq's Foreign Minister observed that the Western media was creating a climate of hysteria in preparation for such attacks. Baghdad claimed a similar anti-Iraq campaign was waged in the West before Israel attacked Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981.

Iraq's First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yasin Ramadan has repeatedly charged that the United States and Israel are conspiring to penetrate the Gulf. In a report from Moscow, Ramadan claimed that Washington was trying to scare the Gulf states into permitting US bases in the region. Once the Americans are established in the Gulf, Ramadan maintained, they, along with Israel, would be able to stab the Arab nation in the back.

#### The Arms Embargo

US-Iraq relations also have run into difficulty over the arms embargo.

#### Outlook

We believe that improved relations with the United States are desired by Iraq's President Saddam Husayn, who apparently is convinced Washington can help him end the war. At the same time, we believe Saddam's opening to the United States is opposed by some Iraqi leaders.

in May Baghdad newspapers prominently reproduced an article by Egyptian commentator Hussanayn Haykal, in which Haykal reported in detail on the alleged Israel-Iran arms connection.

#### US Penetration in the Gulf

Elements in the Iraqi ruling clique apparently suspect that the United States with Israeli connivance—is trying to exploit the Iran-Iraq war to gain military

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Nevertheless, we do not believe Saddam will give in to Iraq's hardliners as long as he believes the United States can help him to push Iran to the negotiating table. Saddam is a pragmatist who has rarely permitted ideology to dictate policy stands.

Israeli officials publicly asked Iraq to allow Israel to connect the Aqaba line to an existing Israeli Eilat-Ashkelon pipeline. Baghdad was enraged by this suggestion and became even more upset when Tehran publicized the Israeli proposal. Tehran sarcastically suggested that Baghdad was about to become a major oil supplier of the Israelis.

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